

Cancer Information Sources

Information about cancer is available in libraries, on the Internet, and from many Government and private sector organizations. Most libraries have resources to help locate cancer-related articles in the medical and scientific literature, as well as cancer information written specifically for patients and the public. Many libraries offer public access to computer databases, allowing users to obtain information electronically. Also, information on the Internet can be accessed using a personal computer.

The Internet is a worldwide system of computer networks containing information on a wide variety of subjects, including cancer. Internet users can find information through the World Wide Web (WWW) and electronic mail (e-mail). The WWW allows access to information that may include text and graphics or text only. E-mail can be used to order documents and communicate with other people who can answer questions and offer technical support.

National Cancer Institute

The National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service (CIS) is a national information and education service that provides up-to-date, accurate cancer information for patients, their families, the general public, and health professionals. The CIS also serves

as a resource for education and outreach to minority audiences and people with limited access to health care information or services. The CIS responds to calls in English and Spanish. The toll-free telephone number for the CIS is 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Deaf and hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment may call 1-800-332-8615.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has created a number of Web sites providing information on many cancer-related issues. These sites provide full-text versions of many NCI publications, fact sheets on a wide range of topics, and other information and resources for patients, their families, and the general public. NCI Web sites also include materials for health professionals and science teachers, as well as press releases and background information for science writers and the mass media.

The following Web sites are accessible directly or through NCI's main Web site at **<http://www.cancer.gov>** on the Internet.

- C For Internet users interested in learning about clinical trials, NCI's cancerTrials™ Web site is a comprehensive clinical trial information resource. This site offers materials to help people understand and decide whether to participate in clinical trials. Recent advances in cancer research are also posted at this Web site. A simple-to-use search tool is available for those interested in finding trials for a specific type of cancer, geographic region, or a particular type of treatment. The cancerTrials Web site is available at **<http://cancertrials.nci.nih.gov>** on the Internet.
- C The CIS Web site provides background information on the CIS and links to other cancer resources. The CIS Web site is located at **<http://cis.nci.nih.gov>** on the Internet.
- C The NCI's Publications Locator Web site can be accessed to order or view publications online at **<http://publications.nci.nih.gov>**. Instructions and helpful Frequently Asked Questions about how to use this site are available.
- C The NCI's CancerNet™ Web site contains selected information from PDQ®, NCI's cancer information database, including information about ongoing clinical trials. Over 100 PDQ information summaries are available for cancer treatment, screening, prevention, and supportive care. Written by experts and updated regularly, these summaries are based on current standards of care and the latest research. In addition, CancerNet contains the CANCERLIT® bibliographic database of more than 1.4 million

citations and abstracts on cancer topics from the scientific literature. CancerNet can be accessed at **<http://cancernet.nci.nih.gov>** on the Internet.

Many NCI materials are also available through CancerNet's electronic CancerMail Service. To obtain a Contents List, Internet users may send e-mail to **cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov** with "help" in the body of the message. CancerMail responds by sending a Contents List back through e-mail. Instructions for ordering documents through e-mail are also provided.

NCI's CancerFax® service is yet another way to request NCI materials, such as PDQ summaries. A Contents List may be obtained by dialing 1-301-402-5874 from the handset of a fax machine and following the recorded instructions. There is no charge for this service except for the cost of the telephone call from the fax machine to the CancerFax computer in Bethesda, Maryland.

Public, University, and Medical Libraries

Books and articles about cancer are available in public, university, hospital, and medical school libraries. However, not all hospital and medical school libraries are open to the public, so it is advisable to ask about their policies and to find out whether particular journals or books are available. If materials cannot be borrowed, most libraries have photocopying facilities; they usually charge a fee for this service. Librarians can provide help in using the resources and locating the appropriate materials.

Index Medicus® and *Abridged Index Medicus*® provide author and subject information about reports published in more than 3,000 health sciences journals. These two references can be found in medical school, hospital, public, and university and college libraries. If journals are not available, the staff can usually arrange an interlibrary loan. *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* is an index of articles in many popular, nontechnical magazines and journals. This publication is available in most public libraries in print, and in some libraries on computer.

The National Library of Medicine

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) is the world's largest scientific research library. The NLM is open to the public, and its databases can be used to search for journal articles and abstracts (summaries of articles). All of the NLM's databases are stored in a computerized system called MEDLARS® (MEDical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System), which can be accessed without charge through the WWW. MEDLARS may also be available through some local university, public, and medical libraries.

MEDLINE®, the largest of the MEDLARS databases, contains 11 million references to articles published since 1965. It is the computerized version of *Index Medicus*, with more entries and references. Abstracts and references come from approximately 4,000 medical journals published worldwide, covering all aspects of medicine. By searching MEDLINE, readers can find journal articles about specific topics, such as cancer, and, in many cases, can retrieve abstracts of the articles included in the databases.

TOXLINE® is another MEDLARS database available through the WWW. This database contains over 2 million references to the toxicology literature, with more than 9,000 new citations added each month. This database covers the biological effects of drugs and other chemicals. Other MEDLARS databases may also have cancer-related information online. Examples of these databases include AIDS information, audiovisuals, and book catalogues.

The NLM allows free access to its databases through Internet Grateful Med®. This system allows Internet users to search MEDLINE, TOXLINE, and other databases without knowing technical computer language. Grateful Med is available at <http://igm.nlm.nih.gov> on the Internet. Internet users may also use PubMed, a free information retrieval service that provides access to MEDLINE. PubMed provides an easy-to-use search tool for finding journal

articles of interest in the health and medical sciences dating as far back as 1966. PubMed connects users to full-text articles at Web sites of participating publishers, and is linked to molecular biology databases maintained by the National Center for Biotechnology Information. PubMed is available at **<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed>** on the Internet. Both Internet Grateful Med and PubMed allow users to place orders for copies of articles through a system called Lonesome Doc. There is usually a fee for articles.

A recent addition to the NLM collection on the Internet is MEDLINE*plus*. This Web site includes links to information about a number of health topics, medical dictionaries, databases (including MEDLINE), clearinghouses, directories, organizations, publications and health news, and consumer health libraries. People can access MEDLINE*plus* at **<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>** on the Internet.

For more information on NLM programs, services, and hours of operation, individuals may contact the Office of Communication and Public Liaison at 1-888-FIND-NLM (1-888-346-3656) or 301-594-5983. The address is 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894. Online assistance is available at the NLM Web site at **<http://www.nlm.nih.gov>** on the Internet, and by e-mail from **publicinfo@nlm.nih.gov**.

National Network of Libraries of Medicine

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine directs health professionals, educators, and the general public to health care information resources. Callers are routed to regional medical libraries, which can provide assistance with research. Further information about this network is available by calling 1-800-338-7657.

Healthfinder

Healthfinder® is a Web site created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide a gateway to online consumer health information. It offers information on selected online publications, clearinghouses, databases, and Web sites, as well as support and self-help groups. Healthfinder also provides links to the Web sites of Government agencies and nonprofit organizations that provide reliable health information for the public. Healthfinder is located at **<http://www.healthfinder.gov>** on the Internet.

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Sources of National Cancer Institute Information

Cancer Information Service

Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1-800-332-8615

NCI Online

Internet

Use <http://www.cancer.gov> to reach NCI's Web site.

CancerMail Service

To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov with the word "help" in the body of the message.

CancerFax® fax on demand service

Dial 301-402-5874 and listen to recorded instructions.

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